

# Raised Bed Building

Build contained, improved-soil growing beds above ground level

**DIFFICULTY** Easy–moderate

**TYPE** One-off build

**TIME** A weekend per bed



**DIFFICULTY**  
Easy–moderate



**TIME**  
1 day/bed



**COST**  
Moderate



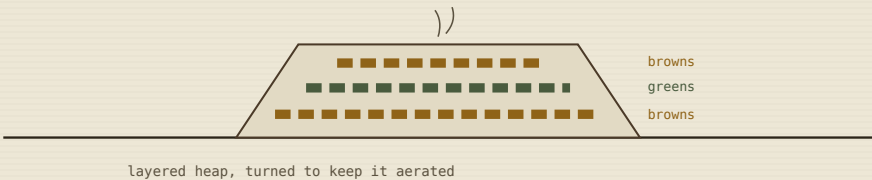
**BEST SEASON**  
Any time, ideally  
before a planting  
season



**FREQUENCY**  
Built once, used  
for years

## 01 Layered fill, not just topsoil

A well-filled raised bed uses layers — coarser material at the base for drainage, then a quality soil/compost mix on top — rather than simply filling the whole depth with bagged garden soil.



## 02 What you'll need

- Untreated timber, corrugated metal, or another edging material
- Screws or brackets for corners
- Cardboard or weed mat for the base (optional, for weed suppression)
- A soil/compost mix to fill the bed

## 04 Troubleshooting

- **Bed drains poorly** — check the base isn't compacted, and that the fill mix has good structure, not just fine soil.
- **Timber rotting quickly** — avoid treated pine in contact with edible soil; choose naturally rot-resistant timber or a non-wood edging material instead.
- **Soil level dropping over time** — normal as organic matter breaks down; top up with compost each season.
- **Weeds coming through from below** — the cardboard/weed mat base wasn't thorough enough; overlap generously when laying it.

## 06 Tips & variations

### PAIRS WELL WITH

No-Dig Gardening

Building Healthy Soil

### COMMON MISTAKES

Using treated timber that can leach chemicals into edible soil

Filling entirely with fine soil, resulting in poor drainage

### PRO TIP

A bed no wider than 1.2m lets you reach the centre from either side without ever stepping on and compacting the soil.

## 03 Method

1. Choose a level, sunny site and mark out the bed dimensions.
2. Build or assemble the frame from your chosen material.
3. Lay cardboard or weed mat at the base if building on grass or weedy ground.
4. Fill with a quality soil and compost mix, leaving a couple of centimetres below the top edge.
5. Water in well and let settle for a few days before planting.

## 05 Timing & maintenance

|                  |                                                                                               |
|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| BEST TIME        | Any time, though building ahead of the main spring planting season is common.                 |
| DURATION         | A single bed typically takes a day to build and fill.                                         |
| MAINTENANCE      | Top up soil level and add compost each season as it settles and breaks down.                  |
| SIGNS OF SUCCESS | Good drainage, easy digging, and strong plant growth compared to the surrounding native soil. |